

# First Suite in E-flat for Military Band

By Gustav Holst

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## Surface Information

- Published by Boosey & Hawkes, copyright 1921
- Three movement suite, including Chaconne, Intermezzo, and March
- Transposed score

## Composer Information



Gustav Holst stands as one of the all-time great composers of western music, and is especially loved by those concerned with literature for concert band. Born in 1874 to a keyboardist of Swedish descent, Holst had a musical upbringing and eventually attended the Royal College of Music to study composition. Developing a close friendship with Ralph Vaughan Williams while in school, Holst became enamored with both the exotic sounds of the music of southeast Asia, and folksong from his native England. These ideas became commonplace in his compositions.

Holst's Compositions are wide in range and varied in scope. He composed choral works, keyboard pieces, operettas, operas, symphonic tone poems, brass band works, suites for a wide variety of large ensembles, and military band pieces. He is most famous in the classical music world for *The Planets*, a suite for large symphony orchestra. In the concert band world, Holst is known for his first and second suites for military band, which are now considered standard concert band literature.

Throughout his career, Holst displayed several trademark compositional tools. He used hemiola, melodic inversion, large instrumentation, and folksong quite often. Holst also used metric devices such as mixed meter, and hocket to accompany his use of hemiola. All of these devices tended to, at times, obscure the barline and diminish the natural emphasis or agogic accent of sections of his works. These techniques, along with thick scoring and octave doubling of melodic lines helped Holst to develop his signature sound. He consistently displayed the ability to repeat a melodic line over and over without it becoming tiring due his fantastic use of harmony and counter-melody.

Gustav Holst struggled financially until *The Planets* made him a household name. Toward the end of his career, he wrote for television and radio, and received regular commissions from competitive brass bands. His last works also experimented with extended contrapuntal techniques and bi-tonality. He died in 1934.

## Other Notable Works by Gustav Holst

<i>Beni Mora</i> (for full orchestra)	J Curwen & Sons, 1910
<i>The Cloud Messenger</i> (for orchestra and choir)	Stainer, 1910
<i>Second Suite in F</i> (for military band)	Boosey & Hakes, 1911
<i>Hymn to Dionysus</i> (for orchestra and choir)	Stainer & Bell, 1913
<i>Japanese Suite</i> (for full orchestra)	Boosey & Hawkes, 1915
<i>The Planets</i> (for massive orchestra)	Faber, 1916
<i>The Lure</i> (ballet)	Faber, 1921
<i>The Morning of the Year</i> (ballet)	Oxford, 1927
<i>A Moorside Suite</i> (for brass band)	Smith, 1928
<i>The Wandering Scholar</i> (opera)	Faber, 1930
<i>Hammersmith</i> (for military band)	Boosey & Hawkes, 1930
<i>A Choral Fantasia</i> (for choir, orchestra and organ)	1930

## Instrumentation

Holst writes this suite for what he referred to as a military band – today we might call it a large concert band. The piece was intended to be played with several players to a part, unless noted otherwise. There are instrumentation discrepancies for a variety of reasons (which I will not go into here) depending upon which edition one views. In 1984, a new edition was published after an extensive review of the original manuscript. The instrumentation for the latest edition, scored by Frederick Fennell and Holst's daughter, Imogen, is listed below:

Piccolo in C	4 Horns in F (3rd and 4th <i>ad lib</i> )
Flute in C	3 Trombones (3rd <i>ad lib</i> )
2 Oboes (2nd <i>ad lib</i> )	Euphonium in B-flat
2 Clarinets in E-flat (2nd <i>ad lib</i> )	Tuba
Solo Clarinet in B-flat	
3 Clarinets in B-flat	Timpani ( <i>ad lib</i> )
Bass Clarinet in B-flat ( <i>ad lib</i> )	Snare Drum
2 Bassoons (2nd <i>ad lib</i> )	Bass Drum
Alto Saxophone in E-flat	Cymbals
Tenor Saxophone in B-flat	Suspended Cymbal
Baritone Saxophone in E-flat ( <i>ad lib</i> )	Triangle
Bass Saxophone in B-flat ( <i>ad lib</i> )	Tambourine
Solo Cornet in B-flat	Double Bass ( <i>ad lib</i> )
2 Cornets in B-flat	
2 Trumpets in B-flat ( <i>ad lib</i> )	

## **Not In Score but Included in set for convenience**

(all *ad lib*)

E♭ Alto Clarinet

B♭ Contra Bass Clarinet

B♭ Flugelhorns 1&2

## **Important Terminology**

### **I. Chaconne**

Chaconne – a continuous variation form based on repetitive chord progression, similar to a passacaglia. Usually in major mode, and in triple meter

Allegro Moderato – moderately fast

Legato – played smoothly, with no separation between successive notes

a2 – a due - direction indicating that two instruments/parts reading off of the same staff should play in unison

Crescendo – Italian for growing. Gaining volume over time – opposite of decrescendo.

Staccato – detached, successive notes should be separated

Tutti – all

Brillante – brilliant

Pesante – weighty, with emphasis

Tenuto – held, sustained

Soli – more than one player

Poco a poco – little by little

Maestoso - majestic

Ritardando – gradually becoming slower

Al fine – to the end

## II. Intermezzo

Intermezzo – originally a comic work performed between the acts of a serious opera, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a middle movement of a large work, usually lighter in character than its surrounding movements

Vivace – lively, brisk

Senza sordino – to play without a mute

Con Sordino – to play with a mute

Divisi – direction for multiple players reading the same musical staff to divide into parts

L'istesso tempo – the same tempo

Dolce - sweetly

Morendo – dying, fading away

## III. March

Tempo di Marcia – march tempo

Con larghezza – with breadth, broadly

Diminuendo – becoming softer

Ad lib – up to the performer's /conductor's discretion

Meno mosso – less motion

Piu mosso – more motion

## Tempos and Time Signatures

Chaconne: 3/4, Intermezzo: 2/4, 4/4, March: 2/2

Chaconne:

Beginning to F

Letter F to the end

Allegro Moderato

Maestoso, rit. al fine

Intermezzo:

Beginning to C

Letter C

10 before letter E to letter F

Vivace

L'istesso tempo, change to 4/4

2/4

Letter F to end

L'istesso tempo, change back to 2/4

March:

Beginning to 17 before the end

Tempo di Marcia

17 before the end to 11 before the end

Meno mosso

11 before the end to the end

Piu mosso

### Key Signatures

<u>Section</u>	<u>Key Signature</u>	<u>Implied Tonal Center</u>
<i>Chaconne:</i>		
1	3 flats	E-flat major
Letter D	3 flats	C minor
Letter E	3 flats	E-flat major (dominant pedal)
Letter F	3 flats	E-flat major
 <i>Intermezzo:</i>		
1	3 flats	C minor
Letter F	no flats/sharps	C major
 <i>March:</i>		
1	3 flats	C minor
Trio	4 flats	A-flat major
Break Strain	3 flats	C minor
17 from the end	3 flats	E-flat major

### Special Considerations

*Chaconne:*

- The opening statement should be as round and blended as possible – all performers should place their sound into the tuba's sound.
- Care should be taken to strictly observe the staccato style at letter A.
- Letter B unison brass and percussion hits can tend to rush – strive for metronomic precision with those hits.
- Mood change at letter C, woodwinds need to be delicate.
- Hemiola at letter D in the bass drum and tubas should obscure the barline – slight accents on the C for the tuba, where it lines up with the bass drum notes.
- Final three bass drum hits of the movement should be very loud, almost like cannon shots.

*Intermezzo:*

- The shorter the opening eighth notes are played, the better.
- Tambourine accents can come out in single passages, but should be in the background in ostinato figures.
- Letter A - low voices should be sure to observe the staccato style marked.

- Woodwind sixteenth and eighth note passages four bars after A – the staccato should also be slightly accented, the tambourine part helps this effect, but is difficult to line up. Be sure the tambourine is not late, as it tends to be.
- Letter C – low voices with sweeping eighth note passages should be as smooth as possible.
- At the transition back to 2/4 time, the staccato should be just as short as the beginning to emphasize the style change.
- Final note should be as soft as possible while maintaining control over pitch and timing.

*March:*

- Traditional march tempo of 120 bpm is sufficient – err on the slow side.
- Strict march style is appropriate for this movement
- Make stylistic changes at the Trio and Break Strain – Trio should be legato and much softer. At the Break Strain, the eighth note triplet figures in higher voices should be intense and rhythmically accurate.
- The trombone soli in the last 6 bars should be as loud as possible while maintaining controlled tone.

**Themes**

*Chaconne:*

Original Theme (measures 1 – 7)



Chaconne Theme Inversion (8 measures before D)



*Intermezzo:*

Theme 1 (measure 1 – 15)



Arpeggiation Motif (letter A)

Musical notation for the Arpeggiation Motif (letter A). It is written on a single treble clef staff in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first two measures consist of chords: a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D-flat, F) and an E-flat major triad (E-flat, G, B-flat). The next two measures feature a melodic line starting on G, moving to F, E-flat, D-flat, and then C, with a slur over the last three notes. The final two measures repeat this melodic line. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Theme 2 (letter C)

Musical notation for Theme 2 (letter C), consisting of three staves in a treble clef, key signature of three flats, and 2/4 time signature. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody starts on G, moving to F, E-flat, D-flat, and then C, with a slur over the last three notes. The second staff continues the melody with a slur over the first four notes (G, F, E-flat, D-flat) and then moves to C, B-flat, A-flat, and G. The third staff concludes the theme with a final note on G, followed by a double bar line.

March:

March Theme 1

Musical notation for March Theme 1, consisting of two staves in a treble clef, key signature of three flats, and 2/2 time signature. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The melody starts on G, moving to F, E-flat, D-flat, and then C, with a slur over the last three notes. The second staff continues the melody with a slur over the first four notes (G, F, E-flat, D-flat) and then moves to C, B-flat, A-flat, and G. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

### March Trio Theme

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "March Trio Theme". The score is written for five staves, all in treble clef. The key signature consists of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 2/2. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The music is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes and others featuring longer note values with stems. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth staff.

#### Resources Used:

Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music. Edited by Don Michael Randel. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Holst, Gustav. *First Suite in Eb for Military Band*. London: Boosey & Hakes, 1984.

Taylor, Kenric. "Gustav Holst." Accessed December 10, 2013. <http://www.gustavholst.info/>.